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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2497

March 1, 1991

NEW CONSERVATION INCENTIVES -- America's farmers & ranchers will be given numerous incentives to tackle environmental concerns when this year's Conservation Reserve Program opens up for bids in March. "The new program has many opportunities for producers as a results of changes in the 1990 Farm Bill," says Secretary of Agriculture **Clayton Yeutter**. "There are some exciting conservation ideas in addition to some expanded criteria for enrollment." **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT CASTS SHADOW on cotton & rice plantings, USDA says. According to a special USDA survey, U.S. farmers intend to plant 4 percent more corn, 1 percent more soybeans, 2 percent more rice, 18 percent more cotton, 19 percent more sorghum & 36 percent more sunflowers this spring than in 1990. However, spring wheat area will slip 13 percent, farmers said. For the first time, the shifts reflect farmers' expectations of prices & costs under the new flexibility provisions of the 1990 farm act. California's drought may keep some farmers from reaching their early planting intentions -- especially for cotton & rice. California livestock producers with forage-based operations will be hit hard. **Contact: Greg Gajewski (202) 219-0313.**

FARM CREDIT OUTLOOK -- The farm credit outlook is guardedly optimistic as financial institutions serving agriculture continued to recover in 1990. Total farm debt at year end 1990, excluding household debt, is estimated at \$133.9 billion, a drop of 1.3 percent from a year earlier and a 31 percent decline from the 1983 peak of \$192.7 billion. The bulk of the 1990 decline in volume is attributable to FmHA activity. **Contact: Jerome Stam (202) 219-0892.**

PROFESSIONAL AG CAREERS are wise choices for college students, says a USDA report developed at Purdue University. In the next ten years, one of the most critical challenges facing the food, agricultural & natural resource systems is the need to attract & educate professionals. The new report suggests college students looking ahead to career choices would do well to seriously consider preparing for scientific & technical careers in ag. The U.S. is not producing enough talented college graduates in the food & ag sciences to fill highly important roles in business, science & environmental management. **Contact: Patricia Lewis (201) 763-9592.**

U.S. & MEXICO SCREWORM-FREE -- The U.S. & Mexico have declared Mexico free of screwworms. "The joint commission for the eradication of screwworms has come a long way in the 19 years since the program began in Mexico," says Secretary of Agriculture **Clayton Yeutter**. Yeutter was one of the five original U.S. commissioners to the bilateral group in 1973 & 1974. Even though screwworms are eradicated, Yeutter says, livestock producers must continue to inspect their animals, treat wounds & send in samples to ensure that a screwworm reinfestation does not occur. **Contact: Janna Evans (301) 436-7251.**

SEED POTATO RESTRICTIONS EASED -- USDA has eased restrictions placed earlier in February on imports of seed potatoes from Canada. The restrictions were placed after the discovery of a potato virus originating from Prince Edward Island, Canada. **Contact:** Caree Lawrence (301) 436-7799.

WOMEN WORRY ABOUT GETTING cancer, but they should be worrying about heart disease, says Ruth Patrick, a nutritionist with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. "Truth is that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of American women, the same as for men," Patrick says. "It just happens to them when they're ten years older." Patrick has some tips to help women protect themselves against heart disease, including quitting smoking and knowing their cholesterol number. **Contact:** Ruth Patrick (504) 388-4141.

WESTERN WATER OUTLOOK STILL DIM -- Water supply conditions continue to decline in many Western states because of below-average precipitation, says William Richards, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. "As a result of low precipitation totals and deteriorating snowpack conditions, forecasts continue to call for below- to well-below average spring and summer stream flows for much of the West," Richards says. Water supplies of less than 70 percent of average are expected in California, Nevada, most of Utah & Oregon, southern Idaho, southwestern & southeastern Montana, eastern Wyoming, northwestern Colorado & northwestern & central Arizona. **Contact:** Ted Kupelian (202) 447-5776.

LIGHT, LEAN, LOW FAT -- That's what consumers are looking for in their meals today and, that's why they should eat rice, says Julie Gibson, senior home economist with the USA Rice Council. One-half cup of rice has only 80 calories, is high in complex carbohydrates and is cholesterol & sodium-free. Gibson says rice dishes are elegant, taste delicious and are easy & inexpensive to fix. Gibson also has rice recipes. **Contact:** Julie Gibson (713) 270-6699.

PLANT IMPORT HEARING -- USDA has scheduled a public hearing for March 28 in Washington, D.C., to review proposed revisions to federal regulations for importing many plants, plant parts & seeds. "Certain plant pests now are found in countries where they did not exist before," says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. "We must update our regulations to protect U.S. agriculture from possible exposure to these foreign plant pests." **Contact:** Janna Evans (301) 436-7251.

MODERATE CATTLE EXPANSION -- The Jan. 1 cattle inventory was 99.4 million head, 1 percent above the 1990 downward revision. The 1990 calf crop was off 1 percent. The expansion phase of the cattle cycle continued as the smaller calf crop was offset by reduced cattle & calf slaughter. **Contact:** Leland Southard (202) 219-0767.

Editor: Marci Hilt Phone: (202) 447-6445

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1760 -- The rice industry is riding the downward wave of reduced exports, but the upward crest of renewed domestic consumption. Brenda Curtis presents a capsuled look at today's rice industry. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1241 -- Rice bran oil; a world food aid gap; lowering hot water costs; how much mulch; temperature-sensitive fabrics. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1749 -- USDA News Highlights; CRP signup information; preparing for new organic farming standards; Mexico declared screwworm free; broiler outlook. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1409 -- Manganese & menstruation; copper & gender; alcohol & zinc moderation & the heart; an RDA for copper? (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thurs., March 7, vegetable production; Mon., March 11, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Tues., March 12, crop/weather update, world ag/grain situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Wed., March 13, U.S. sugar/sweetener outlook; Thurs., March 14, fruit outlook; Fri., March 15, milk production; Mon., March 18, cattle on feed; Tues., March 19, ag outlook, crop/weather update, cattle on feed; Tues., March 19, ag outlook, crop/weather update. (These are the USDA reports which we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(Week of Feb. 28, March 2 & 4)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's latest soybean outlook; Will Pemble reports on a new printer's ink made from soybean oil; DeBoria Janifer reports on a plan to improve work force diversity at USDA.

ACTUALITIES -- Norton Strommen, USDA chief meteorologist, with a crop & weather update; USDA Economist Greg Gajewski with the latest ag outlook; USDA Economist Ed Allen on U.S. wheat production; William Richards, USDA Soil Conservation chief, on conservation compliance.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on a USDA science day for students; Lynn Wyvill on farm safety for kids; DeBoria Janifer reports on USDA's school lunch program & dietary guidelines.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Ag Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information, presented in news desk format.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY10 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY8 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

AGRICULTURE...will start with a bang this year in Texas, says **Roddy Peeples** (VSA Radio Network, San Angelo). Cotton is so attractive that it will be planted in counties that haven't produced a crop in decades. He says the San Angelo area cotton harvest was the best in over half a century. Moisture is adequate statewide, most pasture is in good condition, but much of the coastal area remains dry. Roddy reports VSA has added five affiliates in three months.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS...confronting dairy producers are bleak, says **Louis Rosandick** (WFHR, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.). Lower prices, which are providing about a third less income than last year have forced several producers to auction their farms. The weakened economy is beginning to show up in reduced county & state revenues. Meanwhile, alternating warm and cold weather has raised alfalfa roots out of the ground, exposing them to a potentially killing freeze. But, Louis says, a sense of humor prevails. One making the rounds is "It's so bad that even those who don't intend to pay back aren't borrowing."

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EXTENT OF WINTER WHEAT KILL...is being discovered, says **Bob Hoff** (Northwest Ag News Network, Spokane, Wash.). Wheat producers in eastern Washington averaged 30 to 70 percent winter kill; some portions in central state suffered 100 percent kill. Snowpack in Washington is adequate, but Bob says levels in Oregon are very low, which reflects the fourth year of drought & prevents cattle producers from expanding, despite high prices.

MOVED...Jim Yeary from KVRP, Haskell, Texas, to KGNC, Amarillo, replacing Larry DeSha, who is returning to The Helming Group, Kansas City. Thanks to Bob Givens (KGNC, Amarillo) for the info.

CONGRATULATIONS...to Cindy Zimmerman (Florida Agrinet, Ocala) for her first edition of NAFB newsletter CHATS. New masthead, paper and type style changes. And thanks to Sherry Newell (WJON/WWJO, St. Cloud, Minn.) for her service as editor last year.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division